

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

THE AIR NATIONAL GUARD: AN HISTORICAL VIEW OF THE FUTURE

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ABSTRACT

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The founding of the Air National Guard had its roots in the military's post-WWII drawdown. Several factors forced the Army and subsequently the Air Force to accept a separate, state-controlled Air component against their best professional judgment. The 2005 Base Realignment and Closure process, the Future Total Force program, spiraling acquisition costs for modern weapons systems, and the 2005 hurricane Katrina and Rita recovery efforts have combined to call into question the future roles and missions of the Air National Guard. This has cooled a relationship between the Air National Guard and the Air Force that had grown increasingly warm--a relationship that must regain that strength to ensure our Total Air Force air and space forces are presented in a unified, efficient manner. In looking at this relationship over time, this paper describes the influences surrounding the formation of the Air National Guard. It then examines the issues facing today's Air National Guard, comparing and contrasting them with those involved in its origins. This leads to recommendations on how the Air National Guard should help repair the bond between these two organizations in order to honor its motto of "Ready, Reliable, and Relevant" now and well into the future.

THE AIR NATIONAL GUARD: AN HISTORICAL VIEW OF THE FUTURE

The roots of the Air National Guard (ANG) and the active component of the Air Force have been inextricably intertwined since shortly after the inception of manned flight. As we move through the historical landscape of WW I, WW II, Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm, and Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom, however, we see the relationship between these two organizations varying between the chilliness of the 1940s and '50s to the warmth of the 1990s and early '00s. Several issues in 2005, however, have combined to call into question the future roles and missions of the Air National Guard which has put a chill on that relationship. Given the commonality of mission and purpose between the two, a strong relationship is a must to ensure our Total Air Force air and space forces are presented in a unified, efficient manner.

In looking at this relationship over time and from the Air National Guard's perspective, three questions arise: "What are the forces that affected the founding of the ANG?"; "How do these forces relate to the current issues facing the ANG?"; and "What recommendations flow from these comparisons on how the ANG should proceed to help bring the relationship between it and the Air Force back to it's early 2000s heyday?". In answering these questions, this paper will address the Air National Guard's transition into the modern era. Effects of the coordination and implementation of the Future Total Force and Base Realignment and Closure programs by the Active Air Force and the Air National Guard follow. The paper ends with specific recommendations that help answer the final question posed above. First, though, a review of the historical underpinnings of the Air National Guard will provide a baseline for comparison with today's environment.

Founding of the Air National Guard

Although the origins of the Air National Guard date back to 1908^{1,2} the first 12 years of Guard aviation were very limited with a low point in 1917 when the War Department decided not to mobilize Guard Aero units for World War I. Shortly thereafter the units were disbanded and their personnel independently volunteered for service. The organization was placed on firmer ground in 1920 when the War Department included National Guard aviation units in its postwar plans. This occurred as a direct response to political pressure³ and the influence of Brigadier General William "Billy" Mitchell, other active duty officers, and Guard aviation enthusiasts. As those plans solidified with the establishment of observation squadrons in all nineteen National Guard divisions, a persistent theme began to emerge: the active Army desired an increased aviation capability that conflicted with decreasing postwar military budgets. The solution to

these competing demands mixed capability with cost-effectiveness by establishing ten additional non-divisional observation squadrons in the National Guard during the '30s.⁴

In the build-up to World War II, the National Guard was ordered into federal service beginning in September of 1940. This resulted in twenty-nine National Guard observation squadrons comprising approximately 4,800 Guard personnel being supplied to the war effort. Contrary to the Guard's doctrine, however, unit integrity was not maintained as most personnel were eventually parceled out to Army Air Corps units as individuals.⁵ This introduced a second long-running theme of the Guard being used in a manner contrary to its expected, organizational employment. It remains a simple backdrop, however, to future political battles that would put the organization on truly firm ground.

General George C. Marshall, Army Chief of Staff during World War II, was an astute student of American history. In thinking about the post-war environment, he believed that the uncertainties of the times required a sizeable standing military, yet he also understood the nature of American society. John Mueller's comments about that nature almost sixty years later would have rung equally true with Marshall:

Americans principally focus on domestic matters. From time to time their attention can be diverted by major threats or by explicit, specific, and dramatic dangers to American lives. But once these troubles vanish from the scene, the public returns to domestic concerns with considerable alacrity.⁶

Marshall believed that once the war had been won there would be an overriding domestic desire to "dismantle the nation's military machine"⁷ in an effort to reap the domestic rewards of victory. To plan against this eventuality he recalled Brigadier General (BG) John Palmer from retirement to help develop a postwar military force. With Palmer's help, Marshall decided on a system of universal military training for all able-bodied males. These trainees would "substitute a massive citizen reserve force for a large peacetime professional Army" that would "minimize the financial burdens of national defense."⁸ The plan also called for the dissolution of the National Guard as a federal reserve force, primarily due to its divided loyalties and penchant for entanglements in state politics. This general plan was given to the newly-established War Department Special Planning Division (to which BG Palmer was an advisor) in the summer of 1943 with the charge of fleshing out demobilization and postwar force structure issues.⁹

At the same time, the Army Air Forces (AAF) established the Post War Division, which was also charged with generating plans for a postwar force structure. Its primary goal, however, was to lay the groundwork for the eventual separation from the Army of an independent Air Force. Although the final plan produced by this group differed greatly from that proposed by the War Department, both eliminated the National Guard from the postwar force structure. This

came as the final blow in a long list of slights National Guard personnel felt they had endured. Other presumed insults included misdirected, bad publicity about the readiness of mobilizing Guard troops; age limits on the active duty officer corps that limited assignment opportunities for many Guard officers; the 1941 removal of National Guard Bureau representation on the War Department's Special Staff; and the 1942 suspension of the War Department's National Guard and Reserve policy committees.¹⁰

National Guard officers responded to these threats by becoming politically active in two ways. First, many officers were active in politics prior to the war and had cultivated independent relationships with their governors and members of Congress. This access, combined with the fact that the National Guard had members in almost every congressional district, provided powerful, if informal, political influence. Second, formal lobbying efforts came from the National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS.) NGAUS, active since 1879, used the Constitution's militia clause, organizational discipline reflective of its membership, and well-defined goals focused on preserving the National Guard as a credible, first-line, dual-status force to become one of the most influential pressure groups of its time. The intersection of individual and NGAUS lobbying efforts meant the "postwar planning process, already complicated by inter-service rivalry and parochialism, was...introduced to the pressure of American domestic politics."¹¹

That pressure began in early 1944 when Major General (MG) Ellard Walsh, President of both NGAUS and the Adjutant General's Association, met with BG Palmer and eventually MG William Tompkins, head of the Special Planning Division. Walsh used these meetings to express his concerns about the lack of National Guard participation in postwar planning which was mandated by Section 5 of the National Defense Act of 1920. He was particularly concerned about the War Department's plans to eliminate the National Guard in favor of a fully federal reserve force. Walsh ratcheted up the pressure in May of that year by sending a letter to the House Select Committee on Postwar Military Policy in which he publicly threatened to delay postwar military legislation important to the War Department.¹²

These efforts paid off when BG Palmer, accepting the political instead of the military merits of the controversy, sided with the National Guard. Marshall believed that universal military training legislation--a centerpiece of the War Department's postwar plan--needed to be quickly addressed because any delay would put its passage in jeopardy by reducing public and Congressional enthusiasm for the program. Walsh's threats could generate just such a delay so Palmer convinced both Tompkins and Marshall that maintaining a role for the Guard was a reasonable trade-off to accomplishing the War Department's desired ends. As a direct result, a

General Staff committee comprised of both Army and Guard leaders was established and charged with studying postwar policy effects on the Guard. Additionally, the National Guard Bureau regained a more influential position within the War Department.¹³ Prospects for a postwar force structure that included a prominent place for the National Guard were becoming much brighter.

Sensing the direction of the political winds from the War Department's compromise with the National Guard, the Army Air Force began contemplating prospects for a separate air component of the National Guard. The Army Air Force's 1944 *Study of the Air Component of the Post-War National Guard* "assumed that state-controlled armed forces with federal status would continue to exist and envisioned that these state forces would include an autonomous air component corresponding to the projected postwar independent Air Force."¹⁴ Although it understood the need to cede postwar viability to the National Guard, the AAF had little faith in the Guard's ability to support complex missions. This was reflected in proposed force distributions that allocated approximately ninety percent of the Guard's air component to antiaircraft artillery instead of flying missions.¹⁵

On June 15th, 1945 Tompkins solidified even further the National Guard's postwar role. In his address to the House Select Committee on Postwar Military Policy, he fully endorsed the concept of an independent, dual-status National Guard that was to be manned, equipped, and trained as the leading reserve force. The Secretary of War's recommendations followed in a document entitled "War Department Policies Relating to the Post War National Guard and Organized Reserve Corps, 13 October 1945" or more commonly known as "Approved Policies 1945." This document reflected Tompkins' ideas and went one step further by recommending the establishment of the Air National Guard--a separate reserve force charged with responsibilities and legal oversight similar to those of the National Guard, but in support of the Army Air Force. Although it would retain dual federal and state status, the exact state missions to be supported by the Air National Guard were not well articulated, leading to confusion that persists today. The Army Chief of Staff directed the partial implementation of a slightly modified version of this plan on January 30th, 1946 and the National Guard Bureau officially announced the new policies on February 9th of the same year.¹⁶

General Marshall's concerns about waning public and, hence, economic support for the war effort held true as the Army Air Force went from 2,253,000 personnel and 218 groups in 1945 to 303,600 personnel and fifty-two groups in early 1947. Even these numbers do not accurately represent combat capability because the 1947 personnel numbers included 110,000 civilians and only two of the fifty-two groups were combat ready.¹⁷ The establishment of an

independent Air Force and, hence, a separate Air National Guard played out against this backdrop of “postwar cost-cutting orgies” that were part of “the wildest, most expensive and reckless demobilization in history.”¹⁸ Even so, the basic existence of the Air National Guard was secure. The two primary themes established during this period--the active component’s desire for an increased aviation capability conflicting with decreasing military budgets and the Guard’s use in a manner contrary to its expected, organizational employment--would continue. Soon a third theme would emerge to complicate the situation even further.

A Transition to Today’s Environment

While still technically considered the primary reserve force, the Air National Guard continued to suffer a second-class existence. This was exhibited by an additional, oft-repeated theme of inadequate training and equipment that plagued the organization and significantly affected call-ups for the Korean and Vietnam conflicts. Although each conflict brought incremental change, the modern era of the ANG has its roots in several major legal and policy changes occurring in 1973,¹⁹ a year that saw the elimination of the draft and the adoption of the All-Volunteer Force and Total Force Policy. The lack of draft forces had a significant impact on how the two organizations of the Reserve Component (RC)--the Guard and Reserve--would be used in any future conflict. The Active Component (AC) understood that, “[f]or the first time, Guard and Reserve men and women had to be ready on a moment’s notice to deploy and fight. This required first rate equipment and a trained force that could fit seamlessly with the active component personnel.”²⁰ This acceptance by and partnership with the AC led the ANG to give up its “flying club” approach to operations in return for modern equipment and missions.²¹

The effectiveness of this development became evident in the 1990s with tighter bonds between the RC and AC produced by three significant events. First, the 1990 Gulf War saw a major call up of ANG forces whose aerial refueling aircraft offloaded in excess of 250 million pounds of fuel to over 18,000 receiving aircraft, whose transports moved 55,000 personnel and 115,000 tons of supplies, and whose fighter units flew 3,645 missions expending 3,500 tons of ordnance. Just as importantly, of the 12,404 Air National Guard members mobilized, over 11,000 were in supporting roles as security police, fire fighters, communications experts, and other technical specialties.²²

Second, the end of the Cold War resulted in a peace dividend that caused significant reductions in AC manpower. These reductions drove modern equipment and missions to the ANG allowing outdated equipment to be eliminated. By 1999, a Reserve Component Employment study found that “the Army, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard RCs are

capable of executing the same missions as the AC, with only a few exceptions....”²³ ANG capabilities certainly bore this out as its portion of the total Air Force mission at this time included 44 percent of tactical airlift, 43 percent of refueling capability, 34 percent of fighter missions, and responsibility for the air defense of the United States through control of the First Air Force.²⁴ Full incorporation into Southern and Northern Watch Air Expeditionary Force rotations as well as operational support of all peacekeeping and contingency operations during this period are further indicators of the importance of the ANG to the AC.

Third, the post 9/11 events (including the war in Afghanistan and Iraq) have seen the near seamless integration of the Air Force and the Air National Guard. These operations could not have been prosecuted without the full support of Air National Guard forces. In short, the ANG executed one-third of all fighter sorties in Operation Enduring Freedom, one-third of all fighter and tanker sorties in Operation Iraqi Freedom, and seventy-five percent of tanker and sixty percent of airlift sorties worldwide since 2004.²⁵ This commitment was in addition to significant Operation Noble Eagle alert obligations throughout the continental U.S.

The Air National Guard of 2006 has more than met the original intent of its establishment by becoming a fully functional, highly trained force capable of seamless integration into all assigned facets of the modern battlespace. The exceptional showing of ANG forces in recent operations has validated the ANG construct which has significantly reduced historical friction between the components. Two of the three trends discussed so far have been eliminated with only the active component’s desire for increased aviation capability against the backdrop of limited military budgets remaining. Like the Post-World War II environment, this last issue is once again pressuring the recently tight working relationship between the ANG and the Air Force.

Current Issues

All components of the Air Force face significant recapitalization costs associated with aging fighter and transport fleets. These needs come at a time when the other services have equal, or in the case of the Army, potentially even greater equipment replacement needs caused by heavy use in Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom. In a broader environment, “the Pentagon’s budget, which has soared in recent years, is now being pressured by a corresponding flood of red ink in the federal budget, augmented by rising costs of Medicare, Gulf Coast hurricane relief, tax cuts and the Iraq war.”²⁶ Additionally, neither Department of Defense (DoD) nor federal budgets have accounted for defense-related needs in the health care

system related to Weapons of Mass Destruction preparedness and response, or even potential pandemics like bird flu--areas that will surely heighten current fiscal pressures.

This budgetary problem is even graver when viewed globally. America's historic military allies--Western and Southern Europe--have significantly aging populations with low birth rates²⁷ as well as limited immigration. Yet government pension plans in these countries are exceptionally generous and existing tax rates are already high. These nations will face the "wrenching dilemma of whether to fund weapons or walkers even more than the United States will" and fervent public support for social programs means cuts will most likely occur in defense, security, and international aid funding.²⁸ This suggests the U.S. will be even less able to rely on future military and economic support from our key allies to defray costs associated with peacemaking, peacekeeping, and stability operations.

The Air Force responded to these overarching budgetary pressures in two significant ways. First, it began a Future Total Force (FTF) study in 1997 as a means to gain additional fiscal leverage through even greater incorporation of RC assets and manpower into the Total Air Force. Many of the recommendations associated with this program are only now beginning to be implemented. Second, the Air Force aggressively participated in the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process as a means to realign its basing and aircraft distribution structure. The desired end result was a greater ability to meet current and future needs while eliminating excess capacity as a cost saving measure.²⁹ In both cases, however, the coordination and implementation of these programs created what BRAC Commission Chairman Anthony Principi called a "chasm"³⁰ between the Air Force and the Air Guard which jeopardizes a working relationship that has been increasingly positive over the last fifteen years. As foundational programs for the future well-being of the Total Air Force, it is important to look at FTF and BRAC in greater detail to better understand the root causes of this divide.

Future Total Force

The Future Total Force policy was generated at the end of the 1997 Quadrennial Defense Review to begin study on the further integration of reserve and active component forces in an attempt to create a "smaller, more capable and affordable Air Force."³¹ Incorporation of the ANG into this new organizational construct was based on three of the Air Guard's historical strengths: cost, experience, and traditional ties to the community.³² Fiscal comparisons show that stand-alone Air National Guard units are between 25 and 40 percent less expensive than their Active Duty counterparts³³ for several reasons, including its part-time work force structure, minimal facility requirements, and matching state funds.³⁴ The FTF program looked to further

increase these cost savings through the incorporation of unique basing plans that would bring the Air Force Reserve concept of associate units to the Air National Guard. This concept allows AC and ANG personnel to share operational and maintenance responsibilities for specific aircraft which maximizes the productivity of existing and new aircraft. It would also allow the Guard to divest itself of older, less cost-effective aircraft. This concept is being implemented in a test case where pilots and ground crew members of the 192nd Fighter Wing from the Virginia Air National Guard are working in full partnership with the active Air Force's 1st Fighter Wing at Langley AFB, VA as both organizations transition to the F/A-22 Raptor.³⁵

Experience levels in the Air National Guard are also higher than those of Active Duty personnel. Greater integration in the FTF plan would expose Active Duty personnel to more senior ANG members in both formal and informal interactions. Formal interaction could occur with ANG personnel assuming increased responsibility for classroom and practical instruction of Active Duty personnel. Informal interactions would be available through deployments and new basing concepts like the associate units discussed above. At its core, the purpose of this integration is to capitalize on ANG personnel experience to create a more effective force.³⁶ A current test case has active duty aircraft maintainers stationed with and being trained by members of the Vermont Air National Guard.³⁷

The ANG's traditional ties to the community are critical to the Total Air Force for two primary reasons. First, Vietnam showed the importance of the will of the public in the successful outcome of military actions. Guard and Reserve forces, due to their place in local communities, can be considered "ambassadors to the American people" and their mobilization can be critical to consolidating that will and "bring[ing] the nation together in times of major conflict"³⁸ when mobilized. Second, as stated in September of 2005 by then Acting Air Force Secretary Dominguez, the Guard's historical roots as a militia force give it

unsurpassed tools to conduct Homeland Defense missions. While still involved in expeditionary operations, FTF will increase the role of the Reserve and Guard in emerging stateside missions - a perfect fit for our Citizen Airmen. These changes will not only improve our operational effectiveness, but will reduce reliance on involuntary mobilization, providing more stability for Citizen Airmen and their civilian employers.³⁹

The primary tool possessed by the Guard in this area is its ability to directly preserve state law when directed by the Governor. Unlike Active Duty (Title 10) military forces, the Guard is not significantly constrained by the *Posse Comitatus* Act of 1878 which prohibits the military from enforcing state and federal laws within the U.S. unless the President enacts specific provisions of the law.⁴⁰

In generating the Future Total Force policy, the Air Force was fully committed to including the Guard and Reserve in substantive portions of all Air Force missions. To insure the policy was fully coordinated, the Air Force integrated the ANG into the program's development through early incorporation of ANG representatives on both the Future Total Force Working Group and General Officers Steering Committee.⁴¹

As the FTF plan began to emerge, though, it was broadly condemned by many in the ANG for multiple reasons. First, the near-term end-state of this reorganization would be a twenty-five percent reduction in fighter aircraft as part of a ten percent reduction in the total number of aircraft in the Air Force. This cutback is the result of increased capabilities in newer airframes combined with a need to divest the force of less capable, aging platforms that require substantial maintenance investments. As legacy aircraft are retired, the preponderance of the effect of this cutback would fall on the ANG given its proportional strength in fighter aviation and the composite age of its fleet.⁴²

Second, this reduction (in combination with the BRAC process) removed aircraft from several wings while maintaining organizations' support missions in what have come to be called "enclaves." This new concept lacks a current doctrinal basis and Major General Roger Lempke, president of the Adjutants General Association (AGA), voiced the concerns of many in stating that "organizations and operations without a basis in doctrine do not last long when tight funding necessitates difficult budget decisions."⁴³ In short, many saw this as the first step in removing force structure from the ANG. Recently announced tentative plans to cut over 30,000 active and reserve component personnel from the Air Force in an attempt to protect weapons procurement programs have provided even more impetus for Lempke's concern.⁴⁴

Third, the core FTF concept of associate units in which active duty and ANG personnel are blended in a wing or even a squadron has generated several questions regarding the ability of states to maintain command and control over ANG units.⁴⁵ Due to the inherent idea of consolidation, the associate unit concept of flying organizations also called into question the Adjutant Generals Association first principle of the ANG's militia basing concept (discussed later in greater detail) where bases are dispersed in communities throughout the U.S. Additionally, significant concerns were raised about the willingness of ANG members to commute long distances or even move to maintain their military affiliation.⁴⁶

Fourth, although commitment is evident, the ANG is not written into many of the Air Force's current FTF plans; ANG involvement in new aircraft programs is limited and most new mission opportunities are only in the discussion phase. Significant concern exists about the mission gaps that will occur between the retirement of legacy aircraft and at time when these

new missions emerge and solidify. U.S. Representative Jim Cooper (D-TN) articulated the third and fourth concerns well in stating that:

I'm worried, if we move all the planes away from some of these bases, it's going to be literally impossible to recruit new folks for that empty unit without an aircraft. And we'll also lose a lot of our most experienced, most valuable, and in some cases combat-hardened personnel, who are simply unable to move to the new enclave location, due to the fact that they'd lose their jobs, their civilian employment.⁴⁷

Finally, the new missions that are expected to materialize are in areas traditionally outside of the experiential base of the ANG. These emerging missions include support of space control and warning, satellite operations, Air Operations Centers, and increased participation in multiple Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (C4ISR) roles, in which participation presumably means a reduction in flying and more time spent working with computers--all missions seen by the ANG to be less attractive to new recruits.⁴⁸

Collectively, these concerns led to the beginnings of a rift between the Air Force and the Air National Guard that was exacerbated by the Air Force's coordination and implementation of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure program.

Base Realignment And Closure

In September of that year, Acting Secretary of the Air Force Michael Dominguez stated that the 2005 round of BRAC

...is the primary means by which the Air Force will optimize current infrastructure to enhance both warfighting capability and efficiency for the future. Taking a comprehensive, 20-year view, BRAC 2005 will allow the Air Force to realign the posture of our forces to better address the new challenges we face. Through creation of innovative organizational and basing solutions, the Air Force will facilitate joint and multi-component missions, reduce inefficiencies, and free up valuable resources to recruit quality people, modernize equipment and infrastructure, and develop the capabilities needed to meet 21st Century threats.⁴⁹

The BRAC process was hotly contested by many governors, members of Congress, and state adjutants general who felt they had been left out of the process. As opposed to Army officials who worked directly with the state adjutants general (TAGs) in generating BRAC recommendations for Army National Guard units, the Air Force kept the individual states at arms length for reasons that will be discussed later.⁵⁰

Initial Air Force recommendations to the BRAC Commission included the removal of aircraft from 28 ANG facilities in an effort to consolidate resources and retire older model

aircraft. This suggestion was met with surprise by state officials, the National Guard Association, and the Adjutants General Association who felt the idea left several critical questions unanswered and would ultimately take the “Air” out of “Air National Guard”.⁵¹ Initial surprise was quickly followed by state lawsuits seeking to block the Commission’s decisions on grounds that “the service’s suggestions are ‘outside the charter’ of the law that established the BRAC process and therefore must be withdrawn.”⁵² The uproar caused by the lack of coordination between the Air Force and the Air National Guard almost resulted in the BRAC Commission’s rejection of the Air Force’s plan for the ANG—an outcome that would have benefited no one by leaving critical future mission issues unresolved.⁵³

Although reasonable arguments exist on each side of this debate, the most important strategic question that pertains to friction between the Air Force and the Air National Guard remains why no substantive coordination took place.

The crux of this problem is that federal law, specifically Title 10⁵⁴, states that the National Guard Bureau is “the channel of communications on all matters...between (1) the Department of the Army and Department of the Air Force, and (2) the several States.”⁵⁵ Although an Air Guard representative sat on the Air Force Base Closure Executive Group and eventually briefed the National Guard Bureau’s chief on its recommendations, this information did not make it to the TAGs. This highlights two critical points. First, the Air Force often views the National Guard Bureau (NGB) as a Major Command (MAJCOM) despite the fact that this is not the case. The NGB is a funding avenue, but has no command relationship with state forces. Until mobilized under Title 10, the senior military commanders of Air National Guard forces are the Title 32 TAGs.⁵⁶ This can create a disconnect between the Air Force and the Air National Guard (as in the case of unclear BRAC coordination) when AC Air Force officials deal with the National Guard Bureau in the same manner as other MAJCOMs, and the National Guard Bureau fails to fulfill its Title 10 communication obligations. Second, as the decision-making pace continues to accelerate, it becomes increasingly difficult for either ANG-savvy AC officials or the National Guard Bureau to fully coordinate with 54 TAGs. As Major General Lemke stated, “I think that three-way communication is always going to be just difficult because of the timeliness of it and the fact that it’s not the way people within the Department of Defense are used to operating.”⁵⁷

In dealing with the initial BRAC commission recommendations, the ANG employed many of the same tools previously used from 1944 to 1946 to secure the National Guard’s future. The National Guard Association was once again called upon to lobby for the interests of the ANG, although the Adjutants General Association was much more publicly active in both the press and testimony before congress. Given the direct impact of the loss of military capability

within several states--particularly in a post-9/11 world where homeland defense was of particular concern--pressure from affected members of Congress and governors was particularly strong.

In response, the Adjutants General Association created five guiding principles that provided a foundation for much of the follow-on BRAC and Future Total Force debate. Those principles were:

- Retain militia basing concept (dispersed in communities)
- Work with the Air Force to build upon the cost efficiencies, capabilities, and community support by assuring the continued effectiveness of existing flying units and accompanying force structure with Air Expeditionary Force capabilities
- Each state is assigned a baseline homeland defense force that at a minimum includes civil engineering, medical, and security forces
- The ANG maintains essential and proportional shares of flying missions in fighters, tankers, and airlift
- The AF collaborates with the ANG and states through AGA on new and emerging missions⁵⁸

These principles directly led to a compromise plan drafted by the AGA and Major General Lempke that included at its core the fundamental idea of maintaining one flying unit per state.⁵⁹ This plan was soon adopted by the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, Lieutenant General Blum, and became NGB policy shortly thereafter.⁶⁰ The BRAC Commission, after significant debate, accepted this idea by passing a recommendation that ensured every state with an existing Air Guard unit would retain a flying mission.⁶¹

Although a compromise solution was reached, this event generated significant friction between the two parties. The Air Force rightly believed it had met all legal obligations in dealing with base realignments and closures. Although conceding that no legal coordination requirement existed, state Air National Guard officials forwarded a strong argument that substantial force structure decisions that affected units and missions within their states should have been coordinated directly with them. These differences may have continued to play out with a different end result, but hurricanes Katrina (August 2005) and Rita (September 2005) shifted the country's political focus away from BRAC and towards recovery efforts after these devastating storms.

Many of these issues remain unresolved and the rift between the active and reserve components generated by them continues to grow. This is a trend that must be reversed so all components of the Air Force can focus on their primary mission of defending the United States

and protecting its interests through air and space power. In working out these issues, it is critical for all parties to recognize that, as stated in the official description of the Future Total Force program, the AF is “better and more resilient because of the intra-service competitions, debates and points of view. The proof is found in the product, the force it fields around the globe today. Each component has made immense contributions and will continue to do so.”⁶²

Although frustrating, this debate is valuable as long as it leads to specific solutions that result in better capabilities at reasonable costs. Today’s post-9/11 environment is volatile, uncertain, ambiguous, and complex. The potential for smaller scale yet increasingly frequent conflicts has already driven the Air Force towards the requirement for a more agile, flexible, and cost-effective force structure. The ANG is a critical component of that structure, yet intra-service frictions caused by today’s environment threaten its foundations. Three recommendations follow that may help reduce these frictions and ultimately lead to a force even more capable of effectively operating in current and future environments.

Recommendations

First, although intra-service competitions can be valuable, they must be based on a solid understanding at multiple levels of each organization’s missions, capabilities, structures, and resource procedures. To foster this understanding, more ANG officer and senior noncommissioned officer positions should be made available on all service and joint headquarters staffs.⁶³ Increased interactions between ANG and active component personnel would help reduce misunderstandings over the core issues noted above. For this to be effective, though, the Air National Guard would need to ensure that only top-notch, highly-qualified personnel were assigned to these positions. Upon completion of such tours, accommodations would also need to be made for these members back in their states so these assignments would be considered beneficial, career-broadening experiences. All too often similar, current assignments become a mechanism for personnel to simply gain rank or for traditional guardsmen to remain employed during lulls in their civilian employment.

Second, there will always be limitations to what the ANG can do and still be considered a true reserve force. Extensive support of Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom and Operation Noble Eagle has shifted the ANG from a strategic reserve to an operational force. This support is sustainable in the short term but the Global War on Terrorism has been presented as something very different. The opening sentence of the 2006 *Quadrennial Defense Review* makes our current situation clear by pointing out that the “United States is a nation engaged in what will be a long war.”⁶⁴ As stated by Maj Gen Lempke, though, “[a]t some point the militia

must return to being citizens first.”⁶⁵ Although recruiting and retention in the ANG has not been an issue to date, the good will towards military service generated by 9/11 will eventually wear thin and both employers and employees will find it increasingly difficult to support the significant time commitments currently associated with ANG service.

This reality can be balanced in one of two ways : either full-time manning in the ANG must be increased or current and new missions must be distributed with this concern in mind. Increasing full-time manning would drive up personnel cost but comparable units would still be less expensive than their active duty counterparts as base infrastructure expenses would remain low and substantial moving expenses associated with the active force assignment system would be kept at bay. If this is not fiscally feasible, the ANG needs to realistically evaluate its position of wanting an equal share of all Air Force missions. Highly technical jobs with perishable skills that require constant reinforcement to keep current may simply not be appropriate in the traditional guard force without substantial increases in training budgets. Even with this financial support, real concerns exist about the ability of the ANG to continue to recruit and retain quality personnel in these positions.

Finally, the debate surrounding the maintenance of traditional flying missions versus the assumption of new missions for the National Guard should be viewed in a context of long-term instead of short-term gains. As Loren Thompson of the Lexington Institute stated: “Unfortunately, at the state level the Air National Guard has fairly consistently resisted taking on the missions that the joint force really needs them to do. So now the Guard is complaining about reorganization efforts that would force them to change the way they do business.”⁶⁶ The major BRAC and FTF rift revolves around keeping substantial portions of the flying mission, and particularly fighters, in the ANG. Expending political capital to keep legacy fighter aircraft in the guard may lead to the maintenance of both hardware and personnel authorizations, but this will only be temporary.

As one quarter of the fighter force is retired over the next ten years, it is also understood that new fighter aircraft will not replace these legacy systems on a one for one basis. Even if the same percentage of the total fighter fleet remains in the Air National Guard (which is debatable), actual aircraft numbers will significantly decrease. Historically, this has translated into either fewer squadrons with a similar number of aircraft as we see today (AC method) or the same number of squadrons with very few primary aircraft assigned (ANG method.)⁶⁷ Given increasing fiscal concerns regarding the DoD budget and the additional expenses associated with a dispersed force, the further consolidation of flying assets seems likely. As this occurs, the ANG should move away from blanket statements regarding dedicated flying missions in

each state and push for independent or associate units only where recruiting and retention numbers make acceptance of such missions feasible.

The expanding role of information operations on the modern battlefield provides many potential opportunities for the ANG to maintain or even increase its relevance outside of flying support. The Air Force has developed seven concepts of operation (CONOPS) including Homeland Security; Space and Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance; Global Mobility; Global Strike; Global Persistent Attack; Nuclear Response; and Agile Combat Support. They have been designed to “identify those capabilities an expeditionary air force will need to achieve the desired battlespace effects”⁶⁸ and each defines vital current and future mission areas and capabilities. Critical threads that are common to each and also lie outside of actual aircraft operations include command and control, planning, and decision-quality information acquisition--all areas with heavy ties to information operations. The growing importance of non-flying information operations was also recognized by Secretary of the Air Force Michael Wynne and Air Force Chief of Staff General Michael Moseley with their December 2005 modification of the Air Force’s Mission Statement to include cyberspace as a potential medium of conflict in which forces must be fully capable of both offensive and defensive operations.⁶⁹ This push is driving information operations from a simple mission enabler to recognition as a core military competency.⁷⁰

Many of these information operations missions overlap skill sets readily found in and needed by the civilian sector, making them ideal for support by the ANG. High quality military training leading to the acquisition of marketable skills is an exceptional recruiting and retention tool. Traditional guard members formally trained in these fields gain additional, practical experience through their civilian employment which brings obvious benefits back to the force. Additionally, such missions directly tie into the Guard’s Homeland Security and Defense responsibilities, creating an even greater synergy through the combination of wartime missions, homeland security taskings, and available civilian experience. Aggressively pursuing missions that effectively meld these three areas into a working whole may result in smaller organizations and a possible loss of force structure, but it will secure a long-term position for the ANG in missions that are equally or even more relevant to the Total Force and state governors.

Care must be taken in this pursuit, though. Full integration into the Air Expeditionary Force rotation cycle and availability of a highly-skilled manpower pool for state disaster and contingency response have turned the ANG into the pride of many state and federal politicians. As in the post-WWII environment, the Air National Guard can call upon this reserve of good will as it pursues future missions. Organizations like the National Guard Association and the

Adjutants General Association can also use that state mandate to wield substantial power at the national level. In dealing with the active component over contentious future mission issues, though, that power should only be used as a last resort and in a manner that seeks viable, long-term solutions to the future missions debate. Any other use will only widen the rift between the components. Placing ANG officers and senior enlisted members on headquarters staffs, working for missions appropriate to the Citizen/Airman construct, and specifically taking a long-term, pragmatic approach to flying missions will certainly help. This must occur, though, in an environment of mutual respect and understanding to ensure the nation strikes an appropriate balance between broad-based air and space capabilities and cost effectiveness.

Conclusion

Political and economic weight ultimately led to the establishment of the Air National Guard as an independent reserve force. Those same forces have solidified a role for the ANG in current and future missions as economic realities combined with the unique abilities of the ANG to directly function in the Homeland Security arena. The partnership between the active Air Force and the Air National Guard is based on common missions, capabilities, and an overarching goal of protecting and defending the United States and its global interests. Cooperative engagement is a must to ensure that the current rift caused by FTF and BRAC implementation does not degenerate into an internecine feud that jeopardizes our collective ability to reach that goal.

As Henry Ford II said, "No society of nations, no people within a nation, no family can benefit through mutual aid unless good will exceeds ill will; unless the spirit of cooperation surpasses antagonism; unless we all see and act as though the other man's welfare determines our own welfare."⁷¹ This quotation is equally relevant to the relationship between the ANG and the active Air Force--two organizations with inextricably linked interests and welfare. Only mutual understanding and a willingness to make tough decisions will ensure that link is strong and able to meet the goal articulated by the Chief of the Future Total Force program office which is "a future where we no longer have to say, 'Total Force'. We are the United States Air Force, and that says it all."⁷²

Endnotes

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² The modern formulation of the National Guard took place from 1881 to 1892 when the states revised their military codes in recognition of the need to provide for an organized military force with greater capabilities than the traditional militia. Most states also changed the name of their militias to their "National Guard." These state initiatives were recognized by the federal government in 1903 with the enactment of the Dick Act which affirmed the National Guard as the Army's primary organized reserve force. The National Defense Act Amendments of 1920 further solidified the importance of the Guard by placing National Guard officers on the general staff and at division headquarters. The National Guard Mobilization Act of 1933 brought the National Guard fully into the fold by making it a component of the Army at all times and giving the President the ability to order the Guard onto active duty with a congressional declaration of war. <http://www.army.mil/history/>; Internet; accessed 4 November 2005.

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¹⁴ Ibid., 16.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 16-19.

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²⁷ The developed world population will decline by one million people per year by 2010 and five million people per year by 2040. Peter G. Peterson, "Riding for a Fall," *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2004, [journal on line]; available from <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20040901faessay83510/peter-g-peterson/riding-for-a-fall.html>; Internet; accessed 19 November 2005.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Donald Rumsfeld, "BRAC Findings Transmittal Letter to Anthony J. Principi," 13 May 2005, available from http://www.defenselink.mil/brac/pdf/pt1_03_secdeflettero.pdf; Internet; accessed 3 December 2005.

³⁰ Grant.

³¹ Stephen Wood, Steven Blum, Daniel James, John Bradley, Roger Lempke, and Mason Whitney, U.S. Congress, House, Armed Services Committee, *Testimony on the Air Force's Future Total Force*, 20 July 2005, [database on-line]; available from LexisNexis; accessed 26 Sep 2005.

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⁵⁸ Lempke, *Testimony on the Air Force Future Total Force Plan*.

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⁶⁴ Donald Rumsfeld, *2006 Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, available from <http://www.defenselink.mil/qdr/report/Report20060203.pdf>; Internet; accessed 24 February 2006.

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